Policy briefing
Home energy

Citizens Advice is the statutory consumer representative for energy consumers, and has identified a package of affordable, accessible, safe and fair policy responses to the challenge of delivering secure and low carbon energy supplies.

- Make home energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority, enabling fair competition for long-term public and private investment.
- Ensure vulnerable consumers benefit from the smart meter rollout, giving them not just information but control, through benefit eligibility checks and the installation of energy efficiency measures, including heating controls.
- Move responsibility for energy efficiency programmes from energy companies to local agencies, who know their housing stock and its residents best, with fairer funding through the public purse not energy bills.
- Focus grants on low income families, so households don't fall through gaps in the definition of fuel poverty
- Offer free energy advice, and low interest loans to all households, balancing the benefits to the householder of lower bills and a more comfortable home, with the wider societal benefits of decarbonisation
- Embed the value of energy efficiency in the housing market, as property sales and renovations are key triggers for investing in energy efficiency measures. Information and finance will not in itself trigger action.
- Provide a genuine minimum energy efficiency standard for private rental tenants, by ensuring proposed legislation is enforceable, and setting a trajectory for higher standards in future.

There are three policy areas that need particularly urgent resolution.

- Funding for energy efficiency measures, under the Energy Company Obligation, will as good as run out by March 2016. Opportunities to insulate and cut bills, demand and carbon will be lost.
- The smart meter rollout is missing an opportunity to facilitate the delivery of energy efficiency, whether it is to meet fuel poverty or climate change targets.
- The Conservative Government is committed to cost-effective decarbonisation, but there is a lack of clear, credible and comparable costs across the policy landscape.